

The Jacob Journal

A NEWSLETTER FROM SUPERVISOR DIANNE JACOB

FEBRUARY 1998

Managed Competition: A Sensible Diet For A Bloated Bureaucracy



My husband and I go out to dinner frequently. When we go, we like good service. We like good food. And, we like to pay a reasonable price. I'm sure we're not unique in this regard. Nobody would continue to dine at an eatery where the food was lousy, the service poor, and the price exorbitant. And nobody should be forced to patronize a bloated bureaucracy that doesn't meet their needs and devours their hard-earned tax dollars!

Unfortunately, the philosophy which is so simple in a typical service industry, like a restaurant, often gets lost on the largest service organization in this region -- County government. Fortunately, this Board of Supervisors is focused on improving customer service, and we've set forth an aggressive plan over the next 18 months.

The Board has directed the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), Larry Prior, to implement a concept called "Managed Competition". It's more than a fancy buzzword for "reform" or "privatization". It's a way to ensure that County government, like a successful business, runs cheaper, better, and faster.

To make the shift into "Managed Competition", the CAO and the "Competition & Reengineering Group", headed by Larry Aker, will put the County's house in order first; then increase public and private competition. Unlike merely "privatizing", the County employees will truly compete with the private sector. This assures that the taxpayer winds up with the "best-of-the-best"!

Four basic techniques will be used to put the County's house in order.

The first is to make county government smaller, more efficient and productive -- in short, to cut bureaucratic red tape. Anyone who has ever driven in the fog knows when it gets too thick, you can't see through it. The Board of Supervisors wants to lift the fog by cutting out unnecessary bureaucracy, paperwork and management. The Board has also directed the CAO to take dollars cut out of this haze, and reinvest them in front-line services. This restructuring saves money, improves services and increases accountability.

The second technique is to provide fewer services, but to make sure they are better delivered -- in short, to specialize in the basics. Most parents will agree that they do their best to keep their families healthy and safe. But, they can't do it alone. When they need some advice, they go to an expert -- a doctor, a dentist, a teacher. County government will also recognize when we can't go it alone, we'll call on experts to help.

A third technique: eliminate low priority and unnecessary services. San Diego County has been around for 148 years. Certainly, some of the services which were essential in 1850, or even 1950 or 1980, are not needed now. So, the County is cleaning out the proverbial attic to make County government a streamlined and well-run machine.

The fourth technique is to consolidate programs with other government entities. In San Diego County, there are hundreds of federal, state, county, city and other local agencies doing thousands of jobs. The Board of Supervisors is focused on working together with these agencies to eliminate duplication and appropriately provide the best services.

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Once the County's own house is in order, the Board has directed the CAO to proceed with "Managed Competition".

With 18,000 employees, there is no doubt in my mind that there are lots of great ideas and creative thinkers working in County government. Unfortunately, many of those employees are stuck under so many pages of department manuals and old procedures that their contributions can't make it to the surface. The free market environment that this Board has brought to the County will assure that the ideas of our employees are not buried and don't fall into a black hole.

Let's open a telephone directory to see how "Managed Competition" works.

Take fleet management, for example. In San Diego County government, there are about 3,200 vehicles, such as Sheriff patrol vehicles and park ranger trucks, serviced by our fleet management division. Currently, the division's annual budget is more than \$6 million. However, when I opened my yellow pages, there were 29 pages of advertisements and listings for Automobile Repair -- 29 pages! That's a lot of people who know a cost-effective strategy for car

maintenance, and a lot of people who could compete for this taxpayer-supported business.

In cases such as this, where a highly competitive and booming private sector environment already exists, the private sector is likely to bring the most cost-effective proposals. But, in other cases, our own employees will no doubt show us a better way. No matter who wins the bid, the taxpayer is the real winner with a government that is cheaper, better, and faster than ever before.

Saving money and increasing services at the same time can happen! Several years ago, I recall that one of the major airlines announced it would save thousands of dollars by removing one of two olives from in-flight meals. Savings could not only be realized from the cost of the olive, but efficiency of assembling the meal would increase. The savings could mean higher payoffs for stockholders and lower prices for travelers -- all by removing an olive!

It's that kind of innovation -- sometimes the most simple idea -- that the Board of Supervisors wants for County government. In the next 18 months, the CAO and his team will find ways to cut the fat out of the bureaucracy while improving services and bettering our bottom line. It's exactly the kind of sensible diet this County needs!

Supervisor Dianne Jacob proudly serves the communities of:

Agua Caliente Springs ♦ Allied Gardens ♦ Alpine ♦ Barrett ♦ Blossom Valley ♦ Bostonia ♦ Boulevard ♦ Campo ♦ Casa de Oro ♦ Crest ♦ Cuyamaca ♦ Dehesa ♦ Del Cerro ♦ Descanso ♦ Dulzura ♦ El Cajon ♦ Eucalyptus Hills ♦ Fernbrook ♦ Flinn Springs ♦ Granite Hills ♦ Guatay ♦ Harbison Canyon ♦ Jacumba ♦ Jamul ♦ Julian ♦ La Mesa ♦ Lake Morena ♦ Lakeside ♦ Lemon Grove ♦ Mount Laguna ♦ Mount Helix ♦ Pine Hills ♦ Pine Valley ♦ Potrero ♦ Poway ♦ Ramona ♦ Rancho San Diego ♦ Rolando ♦ San Carlos ♦ Santa Ysabel ♦ Santee ♦ Shelter Valley ♦ Spring Valley ♦ Tecate ♦ Tierra del Sol ♦ Vallecitos

...and the Indian reservations of:

Barona ♦ Campo ♦ Capitan Grande ♦ Cosmit ♦ Cuyapaipe ♦ Inaja ♦ Jamul ♦ La Posta ♦ Manzanita ♦ Santa Ysabel ♦ Sycuan ♦ Viejas

Long-Term, Stable Funding for Libraries A Step Closer

San Diego, CA -- On February 3, 1998, the Board of Supervisors voted to pursue a plan set out by Supervisor Dianne Jacob aimed at doubling the County library budget in the next three years without raising taxes or cutting service levels of other County departments. The plan entails a reallocation of the growth in property taxes, a move for which authorization is required from the State legislature and for which voter approval will be sought.

"Our libraries are one of our most valuable assets," said Supervisor Dianne Jacob. "We should not be asking ourselves how much more money can be squeezed out of taxpayers to improve our libraries. Rather, we must get all the juice we can out of the tax dollars we already collect!"

The San Diego County library system covers the unincorporated areas of the County and the cities of Imperial Beach, El Cajon, La Mesa, Lemon Grove, Poway, Santee, Del Mar, Encinitas, Solana Beach, San Marcos, and Vista. Currently, the library budget is about \$10 per resident, nearly half of the statewide average of \$19.48 per resident.

The action approved by the Board of Supervisors is the first step to bring San Diego County's library system up to the statewide average. This would be accomplished by dedicating a portion of the growth in property tax revenues expected as a result of a better economy and rising property values.

The next step is to find an author in the State Legislature to introduce legislation allowing the County to reallocate a portion of the growth in property tax. Then, a ballot measure would be placed before the voters asking if they agree with the plan.

Libraries Are Everywhere!

Alpine (619) 445-4221	La Mesa (619) 469-2151
Campo-Morena Village (619) 478-5945	Lemon Grove (619) 463-9819
Casa de Oro (619) 463-3236	Pine Valley (619) 473-8022
Crest (619) 442-7083	Potrero (619) 478-5978
Descanso (619) 445-5279	Poway (619) 748-2411
El Cajon (619) 579-4454	Ramona (760) 738-2434
Fletcher Hills (619) 466-1132	Santee (619) 448-1863
Jacumba (619) 766-4608	Spring Valley (619) 463-3006
Julian (760) 765-0370	Bookmobile (619) 463-3024
Lakeside (619) 443-1811	General Information (619) 694-2414

Check One Out Today!

visit us on the web:
[www.co.san-diego.ca.us/
cnty/bos/sup2](http://www.co.san-diego.ca.us/cnty/bos/sup2)

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We hope to hear from you soon!

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